

6  
S P E E C H

OF

HON. R. F. STOCKTON,

OF NEW JERSEY,

ON

HARBOR DEFENSES.

---

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, MAY 11, 1852.

---

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY JNO. T. TOWERS.

1852.

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2018 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries



## S P E E C H .

---

The Senate having resumed, as in Committee of the Whole, the consideration of the joint resolution authorizing the completion of a war steamer for harbor defense—

Mr. STOCKTON said: Mr. PRESIDENT, when the chairman of the Naval Committee announced to the Senate his intention to call up the resolution now under consideration, he stated that the Senator from New Jersey—myself—felt great interest in the subject. It is quite true; I do feel great, very great interest, in the success of this resolution, and I have no doubt that the result will show that I am not the only Senator who feels deeply interested in the prosperity and safety of New York city. I am interested, principally, because I am of opinion that the defenses of that city require the immediate attention of Congress, and partly because one of my constituents—a gentleman of reputation, and usefulness—has been, in my opinion, unfairly, ungenerously, unjustly treated by the Government. I do not mean by the present Secretary of the Navy, because I understand that this whole matter was, by his remarkable predecessor, placed beyond his control.

There was a report made by the Naval Committee, at the time this resolution was first presented to the Senate. I ask that it may now be read. It will probably relieve me from the disagreeable duty of saying anything further as to the conduct of the late Administration:

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred so much of the President's message and accompanying documents as relates to naval affairs, having had under consideration that part of the report of the Secretary of the Navy which refers to the construction of a war-steamer by Robert L. Stevens, report:

That on January 13, 1842, the Board of Commissioners of the Navy recommended Mr. Stevens's plan for a steamer, to be ball and bomb proof, to the consideration of the Secretary of the Navy. Shortly afterwards Mr. Stevens submitted to Congress a printed copy of his plan. The Chamber of Commerce of New York, on the 15th of February, 1842, recommended to Congress the plan of Mr. Stevens.

A joint board of officers of the Army and Navy, to wit: Colonels Totten, Thayer, Talcott, and Captain Huger, Commodores Stewart and Perry, Captain Stringham, and Lieutenant Newman, appointed for that purpose, convened in New York the 8th of July, 1841, to witness, superintend, and report upon Mr. Stevens's experiments with a bomb and ball proof target, suited to the sides of a vessel. The experiments were made in their presence, and a report of the board submitted to the department in favor of Mr. Stevens's proposed plan of construction.

On the 14th of April, 1842, Congress passed an act authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to contract with Mr. Stevens for a war-steamer, shot and shell proof, to be constructed principally of iron, upon the plan of Mr. Stevens, not to cost more than the average of the steamers Missouri and Mississippi, and appropriated \$250,000 for the purpose.



On the 10th of February, 1843, Mr. Stevens entered into contract with Mr. Upsher, Secretary of the Navy, to build a war-steamer, "to be shot and shell proof against the artillery now in use on board vessels of war."

In order to launch a vessel of the size and description of the one contracted for, Mr. Stevens found it necessary to excavate, and erect at his own, and an enormous expense, a dry-dock of capacity sufficient to build her in and float her out. This, of course, involved the necessity of delay in construction; though while engaged in making the dry-dock, he was also assiduously engaged in procuring the materials, fashioning the patterns, and organizing the preliminary details for an undertaking of such magnitude and importance.

In December, 1843, Mr. Henshaw, who succeeded Mr. Upsher as Secretary of the Navy, declined making the necessary payments for materials. In November following, a second contract, very full, minute, and particular, was made with Mr. Stevens, which was followed by a supplemental contract with John Y. Mason, Secretary, in December, 1844, and which provided for the payments on account of the contract. Mr. Stevens then prosecuted with vigor the performance of his duties; and while so engaged, on the 9th of December, 1845, was again arrested in the execution of his contract, by an order from Mr. Bancroft, stopping all further proceedings under the contract, and refusing further payments until the plan for the steamer was furnished. Yet, at this very time, the department was in possession of the plan of Mr. Stevens, furnished when the original contract was first made, and a further statement of his plan furnished in November, 1844. Thus a second time was he stopped in his work. His health being seriously impaired, he was ordered to Europe by his physician.

In January, 1847, Mr. Stevens applied to Mr. Mason, then Secretary, for an extension of time in which to complete the steamer, and satisfactorily accounted for the causes of whatever delay had been suffered. After more than eighteen months, an additional contract was made, reciting the former, and extending the time of completion to four years from the date of the last. By these several contracts, the most minute details of the work were given, and the complete security for the execution of the project, and every proper safeguard, was provided against loss by the United States.

Hardly a year, however, was permitted to elapse, when, in August, 1849, Mr. Secretary Preston refused to make any further payments to Mr. Stevens on account, and the work was again stopped. Mr. Stevens was then in Europe, engaged in obtaining better materials for some portions of the steamer than could be obtained in this country. Contracts were made by him in Europe for such materials. After which he immediately returned home, and urged the Secretary to permit him to proceed according to contract. Mr. Preston, however, declined taking any other step than to refer the matter to Congress.

Whatever delay took place in the performance of this contract, was indispensable to its faithful and successful execution. The necessity for these delays was not, it is believed, properly appreciated by the Navy Department. The experiments necessary to test the quality of the materials, and demonstrate the details of the plan, involved the consumption of much time. The experiments necessary to establish and improve the character of the propeller which was finally adopted, also required much time. Even from this delay the Government derived the advantage of availing itself of this propeller, in the construction of the Princeton, which was thus proved to be superior to any other then in use, or indeed since adopted. Workshops, together with a steamboat, were required to be built for those experiments. Also a large dry-dock was constructed, with a steam-engine, punching and drilling machines, tools, &c., and large pumps, which have kept the dock free from water ever since its completion, at very great expense. One third of the dry-dock within which the Government iron steamer was to have been built, was excavated from solid rock. All this consumed and required unremitting personal exertion and supervision, and large expenditures of money, for which no remuneration has been made. But all delay was satisfactorily explained before the several renewals of the contract, at each period of such renewal.

When the contractor was first arrested, by Mr. Secretary Bancroft, he was in advance, and liable for materials—principally for heavy plates of iron from Pennsylvania, about \$40,000, which was subsequently paid to him. He is now in advance about \$30,000, also for heavy plates and tubes for the boiler, &c., from England. Yet the Government now proposes to sell his property to reimburse itself for previous payments on his contract, for non-performance of the same, performance of which has been prevented by the action of the Government itself.

On the 21st January, 1851, Commodore Skinner addressed Mr. Stevens, and informed him that the Navy Department, considering the contract void, designed to sell, shortly,



the materials collected by him for the purpose of executing it according to his several agreements.

To sum up the whole subject, it appears that Congress, by the act of 14th April, 1842, directed a Secretary of the Navy to make a contract with Robert L. Stevens for a war-steamer, and appropriated a specific amount of money towards the construction proposed. The contract was executed. Mr. Stevens, in good faith, proceeded to perform all his obligations. The contract was afterwards made more specific, its minutest details enumerated, and the time for its completion extended by a succeeding Secretary. The amplest security for its faithful execution was required and given. Officers of the United States were appointed to superintend the receipt of materials provided, and payments for such materials were made by the Government from time to time. A subsequent Secretary of the Navy, without any previous notice to the contractor, suddenly suspended the execution of the contract, and refused the payments stipulated therein to be made; leaving the contractor bound to pay large sums for the materials for which he had contracted in the prosecution of his work. Another Secretary renewed the contract, and extended the time for its execution. The contractor again vigorously and actively applied himself to the execution of his contract. While thus industriously employed, another Secretary again arrested his work, and finally suspended all payments, and referred the subject to Congress. The present Secretary considers himself bound by the acts of his predecessor, and treats the contract as at an end; and Congress, having omitted to act on the subject, he has given notice to Mr. Stevens, under the power to sell, contained in the mortgages executed by the contractor, that materials collected by him will be sold for the benefit of the Government.

It is, therefore, apparent that, without some legislative action by Congress, the contractor, who is willing and desirous of fulfilling all engagements in good faith, entered into by the *direction and under the authority* of Congress, will, by Executive interposition, be subjected (against right, as your committee believe) to very heavy and unjust losses, while the Government will lose the advantages to be derived from the genius, skill, and science of one of the most accomplished naval architects in the country, in the construction of that very sort of war-steamer which the service requires.

Your committee, therefore, on full consideration of the whole subject, recommend the adoption of the following joint resolution:

*Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Navy be, and he is hereby authorized and required to have completed, without any unnecessary delay, the war-steamer contracted for with Robert L. Stevens, in pursuance of an act of Congress passed April 14, 1842.*

Mr. President, I should have felt disposed to leave this report, and the unanimous recommendation of the Committee on Naval Affairs, without a word of comment, to the Senate, if I had not been asked to make some explanation, and if the importance of the subject of which it treats, at the present juncture of time, did not seem to require from me some few remarks. Considering the relation which the city of New York bears to this Government, and to the whole country, the committee are of opinion that every reasonable preparation for her defense in time of war, with a maritime Power, ought to be adopted.

I will not dilate on the importance, in a military or naval point of view, of that harbor. Its great importance must be obvious to all minds, who have given the subject of *national defense* any consideration. But I must say, that while thus important, it is the most exposed, perhaps, of any other important city of the first class on the seaboard. Sir, our defenses require immediate attention. The signs of the times are premonitory of war and revolution. Almost every arrival from Europe informs us of warlike preparation by the great Powers of that continent. Upon the throne of France—I say *throne*, for in fact Louis Napoleon is monarch, and supreme arbitrator of the destinies of France, as much



as Napoleon the Great was in his zenith—upon the throne of France now sits a man, whom the necessities of his position seem to compel to a rivalry of his renowned kinsman and predecessor. If we examine the history of Europe, we will find that since the time of Charlemagne, whenever France was under the control of a bold, restless, ambitious, or unscrupulous monarch, she was invariably engaged in long and bloody wars with her neighbors.

In addition to the national propensity to interfere with the affairs of her neighbors, which modern history shows is characteristic of the French, they have, as we were eloquently told the other day, in the able and instructive speech of the Senator from Tennessee, (Mr. BELL,) as they believe, wrongs to avenge, and dishonor to wipe away. France was never more powerful than she is now. Near thirty years have enabled her to recruit the wars of the Emperor; and for twenty years past, she has assiduously exerted all her resources to regain that military efficiency, which has always given her a commanding ascendancy in the affairs of the world. She has regained it. She is at present the cause of disquietude and alarm to all the contiguous powers. She stands in the panoply and attitude of defiance; and no one can say how soon, or where, she will not pour her mighty armies.

But all will agree that no great European war can take place without endangering our peaceful relations with one or other of the belligerents. We are admonished, therefore, not to neglect those preparatory defenses which, in war, would be indispensable for the protection of our sea-board.

We had some severe lessons on this subject during the late war with Great Britain, and it would be the height of fatuity if another war should find us no better prepared for it than we now are.

And yet, sir, I am not exaggerating when I say that we are at this present time quite as defenseless; our cities and harbors are quite as much exposed to hostile incursions, as they were in 1812. They have grown in wealth and population, quadruple what they were then; but when we consider the increased facilities for attack which foreign naval Powers possess, we shall find that, notwithstanding your forts, your most important ports are as vulnerable now as they were in 1812.

Whilst the engines and implements of war have been, of late years, vastly augmented for offensive operations, those for harbor defense have not been correspondingly increased by us. A hostile squadron is no longer dependent on the fickle winds for an opportunity to approach your shores, or enter your harbors. They can hover, at their own chosen distance, on your coast, distracting and alarming the whole sea-board, and pounce, with celerity and precision, under the cover of night, upon the devoted place which they doom to destruction.

Steam-ships of great power and speed have been constructed, infinitely more formidable than anything which we had to encounter in 1812. Your forts have not been increased or strength-



ened in proportion to the increase of power with which other nations have fortified themselves.

There has always been great doubts entertained, by the most scientific and experienced men, as to the ability of the best constructed forts to prevent sailing vessels, with a leading breeze, from passing them; and there seems to be little or no doubt that steam-ships may be built, which would pass, unharmed, materially, any fort.

Steam-ships may, undoubtedly, be built, which, with aid from the tide, may attain a speed exceeding twenty miles per hour. Such a vessel, in six minutes, might approach and pass any of your forts, at night, without being disabled. One such steam vessel, moored in New York bay, might kindle that great city into flames, and, screaming the proud note of triumph, leave it a heap of smoking ruins. Nothing could prevent such a catastrophe. Be assured, Senators, and let our fellow-citizens everywhere be assured, that nothing could prevent such a catastrophe, in the event of a war with a great naval Power, but a steam floating battery, such as that contemplated by the plan of Mr. Stevens—indestructible, shot and shell-proof, and bearing an armament consisting of such guns, a single shot from which would be sufficient to disable the most powerful man-of-war now launched. One such vessel would be sufficient to defend New York harbor from any force which could possibly enter it. It would combine the impregnable qualities possessed by stone and mortar fortifications with the advantages belonging to ships of war for locomotion. The mere knowledge, by any enemy, that a harbor enjoyed the protection of such a formidable protector, would be sufficient to deter them from hazarding an experiment of its omnipotence.

Now, sir, it seems to me, when one of the most accomplished engineers and naval architects of America is willing to construct a war ship for harbor defense, that we ought, without hesitation, to avail ourselves of his skill and enterprise for such a purpose.

Mr. Stevens is a gentleman of the highest attainments in those pursuits, to which, with hereditary passion, he has devoted the greater part of his life. He is a gentleman of large fortune, and of reputation. He is not an ordinary speculator, seeking a *job* of Government, but a high-minded, patriotic gentleman, who, from elevated and public considerations, and not from motives of pecuniary profit, tenders his skill, science, and experience (unsurpassed, in his department, by those of any one) to the service of the Government. He is willing to connect his reputation with the Navy of the country. He has acquired, by long years of experience and expensive experiments, a dexterity and felicity in design and execution in nautical architecture, which he is willing to place at the disposal of the Government. He does not want to make money out of you; but he desires to confer on the country the benefit of his superior knowledge, whilst, at the same time, he identifies his reputation with the naval history of the country.

He is the builder and proprietor of the yacht Maria, which



beat the America—which, under his brother, Commodore Stevens, achieved that victory over all the naval chivalry of Great Britain—a victory worthy to be enrolled with those other glorious triumphs of American naval valor during the war of 1812—which have done as much to elevate the national character, and inspire confidence and self-reliance in American prowess, as all your campaigns on shore, from Canada to the city of the Montezumas.

The offer of such a man to render his skill available to the service of the country, ought to be met with promptitude, alacrity, and liberality by the Government.

It is not proposed by Mr. Stevens to supersede the use of permanent local fortifications. No one thinks of substituting any floating battery for them. The floating steam battery which Mr. Stevens has projected, is designed, not as a substitute, but as an auxiliary to fortifications. They are fixed and stationary, and invaluable at certain points, where they command the channel of ingress for an enemy. In passing such fortress, the enemy, except under favorable circumstances, may be destroyed or crippled; yet there is no certainty in any such result. In any such attempt by a powerful fleet of war steamers, though some might be destroyed, others would be very likely, under the smoke raised by the broadsides from the fort and its opponent, to force an entrance into the interior harbor; then, without such a vessel as that contemplated by the plan of Mr. Stevens, nothing could prevent the most disastrous consequences.

Mr. Stevens's war steamer, after an enemy had run the gauntlet of the narrows, and become more or less crippled, would move upon him, and interpose an effectual barrier to his nearer approach.

I have the utmost confidence that Mr. Stevens can accomplish all he proposes, if he is met by this Government in the proper spirit of fairness and liberality. He is no visionary, but a practical engineer and ship-builder, who has a high reputation at stake, and which he is willing to risk for the benefit of the country. He is incapable of undertaking to perform, what he knows to be impracticable. I will now read from a work just published by the learned and accomplished President of Columbia College, Mr. Charles King, in regard to Mr. Stevens:

"The extent, variety, and value of Mr. R. L. Stevens's labors and inventions in mechanics should have more fitting commemoration than can be given in any passing notice by one unskilled, as is the writer of this, in the mechanic arts. Yet he cannot suffer this allusion to Mr. Stevens to go forth, without attempting at least to enumerate some of the many services and ingenious inventions and appliances of that gentleman in steam, in gunnery, and in mechanics. From the time when a mere boy, in 1804-'5, he was zealously working in the machine shop at Hoboken, up to the passing hour, he has given his time, his faculties, and his money, to what may be justly described as *experimental philosophy*, and the results have been of great public benefit. Of some of them, the following chronological record may bear witness.

"1842. Having contracted to build for the United States Government a large war-steamer shot and shell proof, R. L. Stevens built a steamboat at Bordentown for the sole purpose of experimenting on the forms and curves of propeller blades, as compared



with side-wheels, and continued his experiments for many months, the result of which we may yet hope to see in an iron war steamer that will be *invincible*, and so should be named. While occupied with this design he invented about 1844, and took a patent for, a mode of turning a steam-ship of war on a pivot, as it were, by means of a cross propeller near the stern, so that if one battery were disabled, she might in an instant almost present the other.

“1848. This year succeeded in advantageously using *anthracite* in fast passenger locomotives.

“1849. Witnessed the successful application of air under the bottom of steamer *John Neilson*, whereby friction is diminished, and she has actually gone at the rate of twenty miles an hour; this was the invention of R. L. Stevens and F. B. Stevens. The *John Neilson* also has another ingenious and effectual contrivance of R. L. Stevens, first used in 1849, for preventing ill consequences from the foaming of the boiler. In conclusion of this dry and imperfect chronological recital of some of R. L. Stevens's contributions to the mechanic arts, to public convenience and national power, as well as renown, it must be added that Mr. Stevens is himself the modeler of all the vessels built by or for him, and that many of our fastest yatches are of his moulding; and especially the *Maria*, which beat without difficulty the victorious *America*, which in her turn carried the broom at her mast head through the British Channel, distancing all competitors, as she continues to do, I believe, under her new owner, in the Mediterranean.

“Of such a man, not the mechanics only of our city, among whom he has worked, and is well known, but the nation may well be proud.”

I said that he had an “*hereditary passion*” for those pursuits to which he has devoted most of his life, and here, sir, my State pride may be pardoned, if I advert to the name of his honored parent, to whose services in practical engineering, mechanics, and other kindred departments, the country owes a debt which it is too late to liquidate now.

Sir, John Stevens, of Hoboken, New Jersey, was one of the most extraordinary men of his age, so prolific of great men. He was the compeer of Fulton, and contributed his full proportion towards making steam, that powerful locomotive agent which it has become. Like Fulton and Oliver Evans, he was in advance of the age in which he lived. Near fifty years ago, he astonished and confounded a committee of the New Jersey Legislature, by the prediction that the time would come when men would travel as fast as a pigeon could fly. They would hear him no longer; they turned from him with pity and incredulity; they told him as “Festus” told “St. Paul” “much learning has made you mad.” As he was in advance of his age in relation to the use of steam, so he was in relation to railroads. These he used experimentally in his work yards long before public attention was directed to their importance. He in vain solicited from the New Jersey Legislature permission to connect the waters of the Delaware and the Hudson, many years before the Legislature would permit any such enterprise to be attempted. He did as much, if not more, than any other man to bring the steam-engine for locomotion to its present perfection. When his history is written, his name will rank with the names of Franklin, Fulton, Fitch, and Rittenhouse, among the greatest benefactors of his country, and the human race. His genius and his fondness for practical engineering, he has transmitted to his sons, who are among the most eminent men, in their vocation, of which this or any other



country can boast. It is for Congress now to say, whether this Government shall avail itself of the services of such men, in constructing just such vessels for national defense as the necessities of the naval service require.

Had this Government taken by the hand Fulton and John Stevens fifty years ago, there is no telling how far we might now have been in advance of our rivals in many important elements of national power.

The proposition now submitted to you is intimately connected with the national defense, and the growth and efficiency of your Navy; and I avail myself of the opportunity to make some general remarks on that subject.

Sir, the recent victories of your armies seems to have obscured somewhat the splendor of your naval achievements. I entertain no apprehension however that the country will ever undervalue the importance of the Navy, as a sure reliance for the protection of the national honor and the vindication of national injuries. You are destined—(excuse the word)—but if you continue a united people you will be compelled—to become the greatest naval power which the world ever saw. Yet, apparently appalled at the expense to be incurred in any attempt to rival the lavish expenditures of England and France on their navies, we seem to have been embarrassed as to what was the true course to be pursued. Steam has, as you have often been told, revolutionized war upon the ocean. The leviathan ships with which Nelson annihilated the navy of Napoleon at the Nile and Trafalgar, are no longer invincible.

I have long thought that the improvement of our steam marine has not received from the country and from Congress that attention which it deserves. There can be little doubt, that we are at this moment more inferior, as a naval power, for purposes of immediate defense, compared with the offensive means possessed by other powerful nations, than we were forty years ago; while England, France, and Russia have, of late years, vied with each other in the creation of a formidable steam navy, we have been standing by comparatively passive. In the admiralty navy-list of 1850 of Great Britain, is found one hundred and fifty war steamers, and she is constantly building and launching others. In addition to these, she has between sixty and seventy mercantile steamers capable of being converted into war steamers, and whose war equipments are all prepared. In further addition, she has upwards of eight hundred steamers capable of furnishing formidable assistance for coast defense.

France, since 1815, has never lost sight of the importance of maintaining a navy; she is next after England, now the greatest naval power of the world. She had at the commencement of the present year one line-of-battle ship of ninety guns, with screw propeller. Fourteen steam-frigates, mounting from eight to sixteen guns of heavy ordnance, and many others of smaller size. We shall have in the Navy of this great Republic—in a Navy of



a country whose people, and patriots, and statesmen, (some of them,) are ready to dictate a new code of laws for the nations of the earth, and to throw a fire-brand into Europe, regardless of all consequences, war, or no war. I say, sir, we shall have in our Navy, when completed, five steam-frigates and two steam-sloops, mounting from six to ten guns. Sir, we had better be prepared for a fight before we attempt to bully. This disparity between our naval steam force and that of other powers is growing greater every year. Yet the tonnage of the United States engaged in foreign or domestic commerce, if we include that of our lakes and large rivers, is about equal to that of Great Britain, and far exceeds that of France or Russia.

Now, these three facts being ascertained: First. Our defenceless condition. Second. The disparity of our naval power compared with that of the other great Powers. Third. The equality or superiority of our mercantile tonnage. It becomes a question of great magnitude, what policy is it proper for us to adopt, so as to guard against immense and incalculable losses, in case a sudden war should break out with any of the great Powers.

My mind has been anxiously directed to this subject for many years, and I avail myself of this occasion to throw out a few other suggestions in relation to it.

This gigantic species of warfare it is utterly useless and impracticable, at any cost, to wage with the old-fashioned ships-of-the-line and frigates. Indeed, such vessels would only be built and sailed for the benefit of the enemy. In the present improved condition of naval tactics and steam superiority of Great Britain, there can be no doubt that we must take new observations; a new latitude and departure, if we expect to protect our own shores. We must build a sufficient number of war steamers which shall exceed any which she may have built: first, in celerity; second, in their invulnerability; and third, in their superior destructive qualities.

We must build vessels which, in speed and power, will enable one of ours to cope with half a dozen of hers; vessels, any one of which would be sufficient to enter any of her harbors, and sail through or around any of her fleets.

Now, Mr. President, all this is neither impracticable nor difficult; and in Mr. Stevens you will find not the only American engineer and naval mechanic who can accomplish this great object. We have the coal and iron, and all the raw materials which will enable us, with the aid of all the experience obtained by England and France in steam naval architecture, to commence, *now*, efficient steps for the creation of a steam navy fully equal to anything now afloat.

But, sir, for this purpose you must adopt an entirely new system of constructing your national vessels. By this I do not mean to reflect on the constructors in the Navy; by no means. All of them whom I have known would favorably compare with other naval architects; especially, sir, would I place no one ahead of



the able and accomplished naval constructor in Washington, Mr. Lenthal. You must appeal to the emulation of all the naval mechanics of the United States, so as to draw out the utmost capacity of that sagacious, skillful, and enterprising class.

You must invite them all to enter the field of competition. I do not see why, by the offer of a bonus for each separate class of war-steamers, proportioned to the magnitude of each vessel, or by some other plan similar in principle, you should not make available all the skill possessed by any of our American mechanics for the purposes of the Government. They are superior to those of any other nation. I have some knowledge of, and entire confidence in the genius, the enterprise, and indomitable superiority of the American mechanic and artisan. My avocations and favorite pursuits have brought me into personal, familiar, and confidential contact with them. I honor and respect them; and I speak with a confidence founded on knowledge, when I say that they *are superior to those of any nation or age*; and I say, furthermore, that the interests of our country in all those great pursuits in which we are most closely pressed with the rivalry of other nations, enjoying the benefit of cheap labor and more abundant capital, may be safely intrusted to their hands. But then you must give them the advantages which our own resources supply in the cheap raw materials of coal and iron. This you can readily do. You have only to adopt the home valuation, or to assess your present *ad valorem* duty on the actual sales in this country. By doing this you will violate no principle of the Constitution, no precept of the resolutions of 1798. You will only be obeying the dictates of an enlarged patriotism. Do but this, and you will rekindle your forge fires, and re-open your workshops, and our constituents in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and all over the country, will once more hear the merry ring of the anvil. Do but this, and no foreign war-steamer, nor English, nor French, nor Russian will scream the hoarse notes of defiance on your coast or in your harbors. Do but this, and you will put a fulcrum in the hands of the American mechanics, by means of which they will move the world.

Sir, that they are superior has been proved over and over again: let the following extracts from a newspaper received this morning be added to the proofs. It has been proved by our clippers, whose unparalled voyages round the world have recently astonished Europe. It has been proved by the speed and superiority of the Collins line of steamers; and it has been proved by the glorious victory of the yacht America:

“QUICK PASSAGE OF THE WITCH OF THE WAVE.---One of the London papers says: A large American clipper-built ship, named the Witch of the Wave, Captain Millett, commander, has recently arrived in the East India Docks, London, from Canton, having made one of the most extraordinary and rapid voyages on record. She has also brought one of the most valuable cargoes of tea that, perhaps, ever entered the port of London, having on board no fewer than nineteen thousand chests of the choicest quality. She is nearly fourteen hundred tons burden, the size of our largest Indiamen, and was built at Salem, Massachusetts, in the course of last year. She proceeded to



California, thence to Hong Kong, and sailed from Whampoa, near Canton, on the 5th of January; made the passage to Java in seven days and twelve hours, then had the wind W. S. W. to N. W. for several days, with light trade wind, and made the Cape in twenty-nine days. Then encountered strong easterly winds from the Western Islands, and took a pilot off the Dungeness on the 4th of April, making a passage from China to the Downs in ninety days, a trip surpassing the celebrated runs of the *Oriental* and *Surprise*, American clippers. Had she not encountered the strong easterly winds up the Channel, she would have accomplished the voyage several days earlier. As it was, she was only four days beating up from the chops of the Channel to reaching the river, while some of our large vessels were nearly a fortnight doing the distance. The *Witch of the Wave* is the object of much interest as she lies in the dock. Her bows are similar to a large sized cutter yacht. By the above it will be seen that she sailed round the world in ten months and a half, including loading and discharging at the above ports. The greatest distance she ran in twenty-fours, on the voyage to London, was three hundred and thirty-eight miles."

Another paragraph is in these words :

"Quite a sensation has been created in the English commercial world by the arrival of the American clipper-ship *Witch of the Wave*, at London, after a run of ninety days from Canton to the Downs—the shortest passage on record. Up to this period the British have retained a nominal advantage in the navigation of this route, one of their traders having accomplished the distance in a few days shorter than any American or other craft; but by this recent achievement of one of our clipper fleet, their last dream of fancied superiority has been dispelled."

And another is as follows :

"THE YACHT AMERICA IN PARLIAMENT.—Colonel Peel, in a recent discussion of the Navy estimates, in the British House of Commons, took occasion to express his surprise that not one word had been said in reference to the circumstance of a foreign yacht having come to England, and, in the presence of the Queen herself, beaten some of the crack English sailing vessels ! That, Colonel Peel said, appeared to him a deeply humiliating event. She was an American yacht, and was described as 'the race-horse of the ocean.' Colonel Peel confessed that he was wholly ignorant of nautical matters, although he was conversant with the pastime of horse-racing, and he flatters himself that he could appreciate such an expression as the 'blue ribbon of the turf,' as used by Mr. D'Israeli. Whatever might be the sailing qualities of the American yacht, Colonel Peel declared that if such a defeat had been sustained by the English sailing vessels at the Isle of Wight, there was not a true sportsman in England but would go to any expense to recover back the lost laurels. Colonel Peel stated that it was part of his creed that 'Britannia rules the waves,' but what became of the goddess on the day to which he alluded he could not say ; but if she 'ruled the waves' at all on that occasion, she must surely have done so with a downcast look. Colonel Peel's remarks were received with cries of 'hear, hear.'"

I have alluded to those great sources of national wealth, iron and coal, and as they are so intimately connected with the defense of the country, a few more words in relation to them may not be amiss. It has been those products of her soil which has chiefly made Great Britain what she is, or was. These enabled her to fight the battles of despotism in Europe. These were the conquerors of a Napoleon. They are indispensable for *defense*, if not for national existence. The nation which possesses them in the greatest abundance, and can produce them the cheapest, must excel all others. They are infinitely more important now, as elements of national greatness and power, than ever before. The race of competition in this age, between civilized nations, depends upon their respective facilities for the use of steam. Steam on the ocean is to fight the battle of supremacy *there*; and steam on land, in the factory, and on the railroad; is to decide the question of superiority in all the diversified pursuits of human life.



Sir, we should look to them; we have them in abundance. There in the mountains of my own native State, and of her neighbor and sister, old Democratic Pennsylvania, are the weapons with which alone your victory can be achieved. There are the materials from which your thunderbolts must be fabricated. There is the armory from which to clothe your warriors in an invincible panoply. Strike the rocks of these pregnant mountains, and steams of victorious legions will come forth at your bidding. There slumber the unforged fetters of the seas. You have but to fabricate them from the materials there abounding, and you may fling your chains upon old ocean's mane at will, *and then* you will need "no bulwarks, no towers along the steep."

But I may be told, advocating the policy of encouraging the promotion of the production of iron, I am running counter to the principles of my party. Sir, I yield to no one in my sense of abiding obligation, while I represent a Democratic State, faithfully to adhere to the Democratic standard of faith. But surely no one can justly accuse me of not being true to the Democratic party, while I act in accordance with the often-declared principles of Andrew Jackson, and of old Democratic Pennsylvania. There is nothing in the Democratic creed which forbids encouraging the promotion of that which is essential to national defense. Democracy, in my estimation, does not consist in giving or withholding a per cent. above or below the average revenue duty. God help the Democracy measured by such a standard! With me, it is the first duty which I acknowledge to provide for the national defense. It was this elevated view of his duty which impelled the great Chatham to say that he would not permit America to manufacture a hob-nail. Sir, I hope the period is not distant when the cheapness of American iron and coal will not permit Great Britain to manufacture a hob-nail for us, or for any market where we can compete with them on equal terms. Democracy, as I understand, has more immediate reference to the construction of the powers of the Government rather than to the fluctuating policy of discriminating respecting the imposition of duties. That must be controlled by questions of expediency—by the changing modifications of the commercial and restrictive policy of other countries. But it is in the construction of the powers of the Government where Democracy has proved itself the bulwark of the Constitution and the Union. When the reign of terror was upon them—when the fathers of the Democratic party saw, under the rule of the elder Adams, the rights of the States endangered, and every thing tending to the consolidation of all power in this Central Government, they promulgated what I have always considered, since I have directed my mind to political subjects, as the true standard of Democratic faith. I allude to the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of '98 and '99. Sir, I know that it is a custom with some politicians to indulge in sneers in relation to those resolutions, and to taunt those who respect them with being abstractionists, impracticables, and dreamy theorists.



Sir, I care little what terms—whether Federalist, State-Rights, or Abstractionists, are applied to me; but I will say what I believe, at the hazard of every consequence, personal or political, and without regard to popularity or unpopularity—the one has no charms to swerve me from what I consider right, and least of all has the other any terror.

I will not say of popularity what Horne Tooke said, that if it was to come in my way “I would kick it out of my way,” but I will say, that I trust I shall always have courage enough, of whatever sort may be needful to despise any popularity, purchased by any dereliction of principle or any sacrifice of personal honor or independence.

But, sir, the resolutions of '98 and '99! the resolutions! I have to say of them that, in my opinion, they are the most valuable legacy, next after the Constitution, which the early patriots of the Republic have bequeathed to the country. They have, in my opinion, done more to preserve the Constitution from infraction, and to keep this Government within its limits, than any other production of political wisdom from the day of their origin to this time. They have been the touchstone by which wild and visionary theories have been tested, and found to be valueless or dangerous. They have been the light-houses along the stormy shoals and breakers of politics—warning us of the only safe and smooth channel of navigation for the ship of state.

I know well that their enemies have pretended to find in them the germ of nullification. But, sir, I perceive no such dangerous heresy in any of them. I see in them a plain common-sense practical scheme for the administration of this Government. A scheme by means of which the Union and the Constitution may be preserved inviolate, the rights of the States respected, and the Government enabled to exercise all those national functions designed to be performed by it; while it is preserved and restrained within those barriers with which it is invested by the Constitution.

Sir, as a citizen of a small State, which has as much to dread from a dissolution of the Union as any other State of this Confederacy, I acknowledge my gratitude to the great men who promulgated those doctrines, and to their disciples, who, since that time, have remained steadfast to the Democratic principles they contain. Those are the principles by which I would have my Democracy estimated; by them I will consider myself bound; upon them and the Constitution, a long time ago, I planted my standard. On the one side is inscribed, “Slavery is no sin of ours;” on the other side is written, “The Wilmot proviso is unconstitutional.”

Thus much, sir, I have felt bound to say in vindication of myself as well as of the Democracy of the patriotic State which sent me here, in relation to the encouragement of the product of iron.



"I hope I don't intrude," as Paul Pry said. I hope that I have not interfered with the prerogative of others—that I have not trespassed on the premises either of young America, or old——

A SENATOR. Fogy.

[Mr. STOCKTON hesitated; and, looking around to see who addressed him, continued.]

I thank you, sir; but my memory did not fail me. No sir; my tongue refused to utter the ungracious phrase. The instinctive power of my heart forbade it.

Thank God for the inspiration.

[Turning to Gen. CASS, he said:]

No, no, "*Conscriptus pater*." I have, as an American citizen, neither the heart to conceive nor the tongue to speak any sentiment but that of the greatest personal respect and the highest admiration and appreciation of your long and faithful public services. May God prolong your life and health and mind, and may the spirit of your country's gratitude rest upon you.

Mr. President, sometime since, in another place, I was as unexpectedly called upon as I have this moment been to say a few words in commendation of a distinguished public man. That was put down an "*explosion*," and this may be recorded as "*explosion second*." Well, sir, I can have but little left, and I propose now to finish the business of blowing myself up by making this declaration before the Senate and the country. Sir, I acknowledge my responsibility to the national Democracy with reference to national questions, respecting the rights of the States and the powers of this Government; but to New Jersey alone I hold myself responsible with reference to questions of a local or transitory character.

Mr. President, I am done; and if your able reporter will do me the justice which he has heretofore done to myself and all others, why then, sir, political quackery may make the most of it.